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SUBJECT: DOHA ROUNDUP

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1. Topics:  
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-Energy & Economy, paragraphs 2-4  
-Labor, para. 5  
-Civil Society, para. 6  
-Drug Abuse, para. 7

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Launch of Energy City Qatar  
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12. Hailed as the Middle East's first energy business hub, Energy City Qatar (ECQ), was officially launched March 21 under the patronage of the Amir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, at a ceremony in Doha. The Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani, presided over the event. A pioneering initiative, ECQ will be the Gulf's first hydrocarbon industry business center. ECQ will be a single point of access to markets and expertise, the Middle East home for global players in the hydrocarbon value chain. Envisioned by Gulf Energy, ECQ aims to attract industry leaders in oil and gas production, international oil companies, national oil companies, support services, infrastructure and downstream activities, shipping and trading, market and resource data, intellectual property and energy trading.

13. The Middle East accounts for over 60 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves and over 40 per cent of the world's natural gas reserves. However, the region doesn't have a dedicated energy business center. ECQ was conceived with the central aim of filling this void and positively contributing to the economic development of Qatar and the region. ECQ will be the Middle East's first full-service energy business center catering to the commercial, technical and human resource needs of the oil and gas industry operating in the regions, with cutting-edge facilities and services. It will also be home to a dedicated energy trading platform, the International Mercantile Exchange (IMEX), which will be regulated by the Qatar Financial Center Regulatory Authority.

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Qatar GDP Expected to Grow by 27.2%  
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14. Higher liquefied natural gas (LNG) and oil production and very favorable energy prices will lift Qatar's economy significantly this year. Government economic figures indicate Qatar's GDP is projected to grow by 27.2% in 2006, translating into a GDP per capita of \$43,618 in 2006. Qatar's

LNG exports soared 28% between 2003 and 2005 and totaled 24 million tons last year. Qatargas and RasGas's new production lines at Ras Laffan have lifted Qatar's LNG output. Qatar currently ranks second to Indonesia in LNG supplies; in 2012 Qatar will overtake Indonesia and become the world's largest LNG exporter. LNG output will exceed 77 million tons in 2012. Qatar has invested more than \$60 billion into projects to tap its mammoth offshore North Field, the world's largest reservoir of non-associated gas. In the next five years, more than half of that sum will be pumped into new LNG units and expansion projects to reach that target. Qatar Petroleum has allocated nearly \$33.5 billion in its five-year plan that was kicked off in 2005 for LNG and piped gas projects. Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Industry, Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah, said Qatar is becoming the dominant LNG exporter in the world and its gas production capacity was set to rise to 25 billion cubic feet per day after the completion of the giant projects under construction.

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Regional Indian Ambassadors Discuss Labor Issues  
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15. At the annual meeting of Indian ambassadors from the GCC countries, labor issues took center stage. Mission chiefs discussed the numerous problems faced by their nationals in the Gulf countries. In response to the numerous concerns raised, Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Rav proposed measures to halt the mistreatment of low-waged Indian workers in the Gulf. Various proposals included: instituting stringent regulations to curb the illegal recruitment of workers from India; requiring that all job contracts involving unskilled and semi-skilled workers be officially verified by Indian missions in the respective countries; amending the Indian Emigration Act of 1983 to empower state governments in India to prosecute unlicensed recruiting agents and those practicing illegally; and briefing workers on prevailing labor situation in host

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country prior to their arrival. Also of special concern were the problem of Indian domestic workers in the Gulf, particularly housemaids, and other workers who languish in local jails for committing minor crimes, and sponsors withholding workers' passports.

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In the Absence of NGOs... CSOs  
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16. At a two-day National Dialogue on Civil Society organized by the UN Special Rapporteur for People with Special needs participants debated the role and effectiveness of civil society organizations (CSOs). Addressing participants, Dr. Ghaila bint Mohamed al-Thani, chairperson of the National Health Authority board, stated that Qatar had the required potential to have an active and growing civil society and gatherings such as the two-day dialogue represented the first step in a process of positive interaction and in promoting an environment conducive to the evolution of civil society organizations. In commenting on the weakness of civil society in the Arab world, UN Special Rapporteur for People with Special Needs Sheikhha Hessa Bint Khalifa bin Ahmad al-Thani cited the relationship between the individual and state as a primary cause. Specifically, Sheikhha Hessa pointed to the lack of democracy and freedom for these organizations to operate and develop. Participants also discussed the growing need for civil society organizations to provide assistance and services in the absence of active NGOs. CSOs, which encompass a broader array of organizations, e.g., community groups, labor unions, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, foundations and the like, are needed to fill the void in countries with fledgling, if any NGOs.

## Qatar's Efforts at Addressing Drug Addiction

¶7. The Youth Department of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs (SCFA) in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recently concluded a three-day workshop on drug prevention. Experts and officials working in the field of prevention and treatment of addiction and substance abuse attended the workshop. Citing recent studies on drug addiction, Regional Epidemiology Advisor at UNODC told participants that the number of drug addicts among teenagers is on the rise in the Gulf region and that the region was at risk for the spread of diseases such as AIDS. In the case of Qatar, preliminary studies conducted by the SCFA have shown that drug addiction is a serious problem among nationals, especially young people and women. Drugs include hashish, heroin, and opium. While the magnitude of the problem is still unknown, according to Mariam Al-Hajri, head of the Youth Department, the SCFA has decided to establish a rehabilitation center for drug addicts to address the serious problem of drug addiction and misuse in the country. The center will include a research center, along with therapeutic and detoxification facilities and will service nationals as well as expatriates.

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